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ABSTRACT

California Assembly Bill (AB) 1725 was passed to improve the operation of the state's community colleges with respect to finance, governance, affirmative action, employment policies, instructional technique, and accountability, providing a $5 million fund for staff development. To assess the effects of AB 1725 on the quantity and quality of faculty development activities, a study was conducted in 1992 of the perceptions of those in charge of development at a random sample of 40 community colleges in the state. Questionnaires distributed to the development personnel at the colleges sought information on the types and extent of current development activities and estimations of development activity five years previously; i.e., before AB 1725. Study findings, based on a 42.5% response rate (n=17), included the following: (1) the modal response for the proportion of faculty involved in development activities on respondents' campuses was more than 70%, compared to 10%-30% estimated for five years ago; (2) five years ago, development activities were almost exclusively professional meetings/conferences and continuing education, while current activities included workshops, retreats, campus presentations, and participation in governance; (3) the most common incentive for development currently was travel money, followed by professional commitment; and (4) while the chief obstacle five years ago was the lack of designated funds, respondents cited heavy teaching loads as the current most common obstacle. The survey instrument is appended. (BCY)

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# ENHANCING FACULTY DEVELOPMENT:

# THE IMPACT OF AB1725 ON CALIFORNIA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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# ENHANCING FACULTY DEVELOPMENT:

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## Introduction

Throughout the whole range of institutions of higher education, college and university faculty members have three basic responsibilities: teaching, research, and service (Clark, 1987). Since service is usually based on one's expertise, it can be regarded as a extension of the teaching function. What is considered as research varies all the way from the publication of a major scientific discovery to keeping up with current developments in one's field. Looking at the array of activities that are carried out by faculty members, it has been argued that the lifelong preoccupations of academics involve instruction and inquiry (Clark, 1987). Much as elite universities have had difficulties in rewarding teaching as strongly as research, community colleges have struggled with finding ways to stimulate professors' continuing learning and research, or "faculty development." The heavy teaching load is one of the problems here, but so is the nature of the teaching, since it is typically at introductory levels of the disciplines and often focuses on remedial work (Clark, 1987).

In recent years California has attempted to reform its community colleges and encourage greater faculty (and staff) development. The most important piece of legislation in this respect is Assembly Bill 1725. The overall bill addresses the

educational role of community colleges in the state and attempts to improve their operation with respect to finance, governance, affirmative action, employment policies, instructional technique, and accountability. A specific fund of $5 million was provided for staff development. This money was to go to local campuses insofar as they set up committees and followed guidelines for its use. Implementation of staff development programs on the local campuses has taken different paths. In some instances, college administrations have been the prime movers in setting up the programs and have focused them largely on administrative goals such as those provided for in other sections of AB1725. In other situations, especially on campuses where some faculty/staff development activity predated AB1725, faculty had greater input in taking new initiatives and choosing among a wide variety of activities which constitute faculty development.

This paper is a preliminary attempt to assess the effects of AB 1725 on the quantity and quality of faculty development activites on local campuses in California. For this purpose a four-page questionnaire was sent out to a random sample of California community colleges. The questionnaire was sent to the person on campus who was charged with overseeing staff development activites. Depending on the campus, this was the chair of an administrative and/or faculty committee, a full-time administrator (usually in Personnel or Human Resources), or a faculty member who had a full-time reassignment as staff development director. The survey instrument itself asked about the types of development

activities on campus, the extent of faculty involvement, and the obstacles and rewards for such activity both before and after the passage of AB1725 (see Appendix). The sample of forty colleges was chosen randomly from among the total list of 107 community colleges in the state. Eventually, 17 responses were returned from the forty colleges in the sample. This represents a return rate of 42.5%, which is only slightly below two previous surveys (Knowlton and Ratliffe, 1992).

## Results

The first issue we want to discuss is the proportion of faculty involved in development activities. We asked respondents to compare the situation on their campus five years ago with the current state of affairs. They were requested to estimate the proportion of their faculty involved in development activities, with several cateegories of response offered. (For a summary of results, see Table 1.) The modal response for five years ago was 10-30%; today it is more than 70%. Only one campus reported its level of involvement for the two time periods as being in the same statistical category. This respondent, having marked the "10-30%" category for both time periods, added that more people were now involved, even though the proportion was still within the 10-30% range. Thus, all respondents reported an increase in the level of involvement.

To gauge the amount of the increase in another way, a 1 to 5 point scale was assigned to the five categories above (1=less than 10%, etc.). By this procedure we were able to determine that the

mean response for five years ago was 2.2 (10-30% category), while today it is 4.1 (51-70% category). This represents a sizable increase, conceivably a doubling or tripling of faculty development on these campuses. Incidentally, we should note that our question construction may tend to understate the amount of current activities. This is because, on some campuses, involvement in development activities is required of all faculty members as part of their employment contract. Thus, our highest category of involvement (i.e., more than 70%), which was marked by over half the respondents to describe the current situation, may have included many in the 90-100% range.

**Table 1**: Proportion of faculty involved in development activities, pre- and post-AB1725 (N=17)

| | 1987 | 1992 |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 10% | 3 | |
| 10 - 30 % | 9 | 1 |
| 31 - 50 % | 3 | 5 |
| 51 - 70 % | 2 | 2 |
| More than 70% | | 9 |

Questions--If faculty are conscripted to these activities, are they likely to be beneficial in the ways intended? With this substantial increase in faculty development activity, what are the

consequences for student outcomes?

When we look at the kinds of activities in which faculty were and are involved, a more complex picture emerges (See Table 2).

Table 2: Most common faculty development activities, pre- and post-AB 1725 references.

| | 1987 | 1992 |
|---|---|---|
| Continuing Education | 5 | 4 |
| Professional Meetings | 9 | 5 |
| Teaching Conferences | 9 | 8 |
| Workshops | | 4 |
| Governance | | 3 |
| Retreats | | 2 |
| Campus Presentations | | 2 |

Five years ago, the most common activities were attending professional meetings and teaching conferences and continuing education. No other type of activity was mentioned by more than one respondent. In the current situation, meetings, conferences, and continuing education are still among the major activities, as might be expected. However, workshops, retreats, making campus presentations, and participation in governance have also become significant development activities. While the data do not directly

support the inference, it would appear that these latter activities account for a good portion of the increase in the amount of faculty development which is now happening.

Questions--Are these activities valuable enough to warrant the resources and time put into them? Can faculty continue to benefit from workshops and retreats, if the content of those activities is not varied significantly from one year to the next? To what extent are these activities related to the expertise which faculty members bring to their college? Should they be? How have these activities (and which specific ones) effected faculty or campus morale?

Next, there is the question of rewards which encourage faculty development. While we might expect that commitment to the academic role with its expectations of teaching and learning would be sufficient to guarantee continuing faculty development, this commitment is probably not enough to bring about widespread participation. Faculty at prestigious, research-oriented universities have ready access to external rewards such as major research grants, professional recognition, and awards. Because these rewards are less readily available to community college faculty, it is necessary to generate more internal incentives to professional development. AB 1725 appears to have done this.

We asked respondents to rank the most important rewards or incentives for faculty development that existed at their college five years ago and today. By scoring the responses based on rank (5 for first rank, etc), it is apparent that the responses are different for the two time periods. (See Table 3) In addition to

institutionalized rewards, we also included a category of incentive based on intrinsic motivation. We refer to this as "commitment to the profession." In the earlier time period, we see that this "commitment" and "travel money" found the strongest support as the most important incentives for faculty. Next in order came "salary step increases", followed in order by "release time", "sabbaticals", and "extra income." For the current situation we see that "travel money" has now become the most important reward, with "commitment" falling to second place. Next in order come

**Table 3:** Rank ordering of most common incentives for faculty development, pre- and post- AB1725 (Rank score in parenthesis)

| | 1987 | 1992 |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Professional Commitment (29) | Travel Money (30) |
| 2 | Travel Money (24) | Professional Commitment (28) |
| 3 | Salary Step Increase (18) | Flexible Calendar (20) |
| 4 | Release Time (11) | Release Time (14) |
| 5 | Sabbaticals (11) | Salary Step Increase (14) |
| 6 | Extra Income (8) | Sabbaticals (7) |
| 7 | | Public Recognition (6) |

"flexible calendar", "release time", "salary step increase", "sabbaticals", and "public recognition".

It is interesting to speculate on the specific kinds of activities which are most likely to be associated with these various rewards. While some of these incentives (e.g., "commitment to the profession") may be associated with any of the forms of faculty development discussed above, some are likely to be incentives for only certain kinds of activities. For example, "salary step increases" are predominantly rewards for continuing education, since most community colleges operate on the basis of a graduate unit/salary step system. Thus, it would appear that continuing education was one of the major forms of faculty development in the earlier time period. If we consider "travel money" as a reward, it is unlikely to be associated with supporting continuing education. More commonly, it would involve travel to professional meetings or teaching conferences. Accordingly, these opportunities appear to have been enhanced under AB 1725. Finally, we have the "flexible calendar" as an incentive. While this mechanism may support attendance at conferences and meetings, it is most likely associated with the considerable increase in references to "workshops" and "retreats" as forms of faculty development in the current situation.

Questions--What are the ultimate goals of faculty development? Personal improvement? Enhancement of teaching quality? If these goals can be specified, is the post-AB1725 reward system delivering the right mix of development activities to approach these goals?

What are the relative costs of the various rewards? In an era of fiscal constraints, might some of the less expensive rewards be utilized to greater advantage?

Our last concern has to do with the perceived obstacles to faculty development on the local campuses. We asked respondents to rank order what they regarded as the major obstacles in the two time periods. (See Table 4) Prior to AB1725, the most important constraint noted was the lack of designated funds for development

Table 4: Rank ordering of most common obstacles to faculty development, pre- and post- AB1725 (Rank score in parenthesis)

| | 1987 | 1992 |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Lack of designated funds (45) | Heavy Teaching Load (27) |
| 2 | Heavy Teaching Load (19) | Culture and Attitude (22) |
| 3 | Culture and Attitude (13) | Lack of Designated Funds (10) |
| 4 | Lack of Staff Development Coord. (4) | |

activities. Also seen as obstacles were the heavy teaching load, the "culture and attitudes" on campus, and the absence of a specific organizational role for coordinating staff development activities. In the current period, the rank ordering of these

obstacles has changed. The largest constraint on development is now considered to be the heavy teaching load, followed by culture and attitudes and lack of sufficient funds for development activities.

To get some sense of what "culture and attitudes" encompasses, we asked respondents to describe how this and any other constraints operated on their campus. The following are some of their comments about "culture and attitudes":

--"Large number of older faculty with established methods and philosophies resist new ideas."

--"Employee attitude--especially toward Flex Day! Many are not used to spending 6 hours a day on the job and are resentful when asked to participate in on-campus activities."

--"Some faculty do not believe they need staff development! Others are upset about leaving their classes to attend."

--"Faculty still isolationists."

--"Many of our faculty have been here a long time and don't seem very responsive to change."

However, there is evidence that things are changing. Faculty are accustomed to one kind of routine but appear to be adapting to a new one encompassing faculty development activities as one aspect of their academic role. As one respondent stated, "Attitudes are changing, but it's slow. Many people are overloaded and demands are so high that Staff Development activities have to be made a priority."

Overall, many repondents focused less on the continuing

obstacles than on the successes wrought by AB1725. The following are examples of such comments:

--"The campus is very supportive of faculty development and AB1725 has made it even more so."

--"AB1725 has had an enormous positive effect at XCC."

--"...many more [faculty are] involved in shared governance."

--"All folks...are very productive and busy."

--"Overall dynamics are very! good!"

--"There is general support from all campus factions for Prof. Dev."

These comments from campuses where development activities are now well-established seem to represent the potential of AB1725.

Questions--Since missing classes may damage one's sense of being a responsible teacher, can staff development activities be arranged in such a way that they do not conflict with classes? More important, can staff development be made to coincide with serving one's students, e.g., by having guest lecturers on campus who can discuss exciting discoveries at the frontiers of knowledge in various disciplines? Are their differences in the campus cultures into which AB 1725 guidelines and funds were injected?

## Conclusion

One of the surprising findings of our research is the heterogeneity of our sample. Some of the campuses had significant staff development activities in place before the passage of AB1725. These campuses appear to have put the additional funds and guidelines to good use in expanding and refining their programs.

On the other hand, some campuses are still in the throes of organizing their development programs and working out the inevitable start-up problems. Several complained that, in the words of one respondent, "Flex is not flexible." Since other campuses have made it work and solved these problems, we expect that this success will spread further at California's community colleges.

Question--Even though campuses and their cultures vary considerably, would it be helpful to set up some system whereby late-comers to staff development could learn more from the "early birds"? Could some such communicative mechanism not only help to resolve problems more quickly before staff development gets stigmatized by its missteps, but also give campuses some image of the prospect of their future success?

## REFERENCES

Clark, Burton R. 1987. The Academic Life: Small Worlds, Different Worlds. Princeton, New Jersey: Carnegie Foundation.

Knowlton, Lois M. and Sharon A. Ratliffe. 1992. "Statewide Staff Development Survey Reveals Trends and Outcomes in California." The Journal of Staff, Program, and Organization Development, Vol./2 (Summer, 1992), pp. 111-116.

APPENDIX

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

With the passage of AB 1725, California has taken a step forward in stimulating the professional development of its faculty (and staff). This survey is intended to investigate some of the results of this legislation at the level of local community colleges themselves. We are interested in the successes of these recent reforms, as well as continuing obstacles to promoting faculty development. In addition, we feel it is important to develop greater knowledge about what happens at comparable institutions of higher education. Hopefully, this will facilitate reforms which build on successes which have occurred elsewhere in the state.

We would really appreciate your cooperation with our research. We have tried to keep the survey instrument brief and to the point so that it should not take much of your time. If you have information or input on faculty development beyond that requested for our survey, we are definitely interested in hearing from you. Moreover, if you have a written report or evaluation of the faculty development activities on your campus, we would appreciate your sharing it with us, if possible. By way of reciprocating, we will be happy to send you a report of our results this summer.

Thank you.

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PLEASE RETURN YOUR RESPONSES BY MAY 1, 1992

I. Mark any of the following activities which are considered to be faculty development on your campus.

a. Publications or public performance _____
b. Continuing education in one's field _____
c. Continuing education related to one's field (e.g., computer skills) _____
d. Continuing education unrelated to one's field (e.g., wellness) _____
e. Presentations at professional meetings _____
f. Attending professional meetings _____
g. Attending conferences on teaching _____
h. Consulting with outside organizations _____
i. Teaching or curricular innovation _____
j. Campus or community presentations _____
k. Participation in governance _____
l. Other

_____

_____

II. Now we would like you to focus on faculty development as it existed on your campus five years ago. (If you feel you do not have sufficient information about that period, feel free to discuss this with others on your campus who might be more familiar with this time period.)

A. What proportion of your faculty would you estimate were involved in any of the faculty development activities you marked above?

less than 10% _____
10-30% _____
31-50% _____
51-70% _____
more than 70% _____

B. Of all the activities marked above (under I), which were most common among your faculty five years ago?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

C. What were the most important rewards or incentives for faculty development at your campus five years ago? (Please rank on a 1-5 scale, with 1 being most important.)

a. salary step increases _____
b. other extra income
(e.g., book revenue, special project pay) _____
c. public recognition _____
d. travel money _____
e. released time from teaching _____
f. career mobility _____
g. flexible calendar _____
h. sabbatical leave _____
i. commitment to the profession
(i.e., intrinsic motivation) _____
other

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Briefly describe mechanisms through which rewards were distributed (i.e., who decided and how it was carried out).

_____

_____

_____

_____

D. What do you consider to have been the main obstacles or constraints on faculty development at your campus five years ago? (Please rank on a 1-5 scale, with 1 being most significant.)

administration
attitudes _____
organization _____
faculty organizations
senate _____
employee organization _____
heavy teaching load _____
campus culture and attitudes _____
lack of designated funds _____
other

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Briefly describe how these constraints operated on your campus at that time.

_____

_____

_____

_____

III. Now we would like you to consider the current situation at your campus regarding faculty development. Answer the following questions in light of this situation.

A. What proportion of your faculty would you estimate are currently involved in any of the faculty development activities you marked above (under I)?

less than 10% _____
10-30% _____
31-50% _____
51-70% _____
more than 70% _____

B. Of all the activities marked above (under I), which are currently most common among your faculty?

_____

_____

_____

_____

C. What are currently the most important rewards or incentives for faculty development at your campus? (Please rank on a 1-5 scale, with 1 being most important.)

a. salary step increases _____
b. other extra income
(e.g., book revenue, special project pay) _____
c. public recognition _____
d. travel money _____
e. released time from teaching _____
f. career mobility _____
g. flexible calendar _____
h. sabbatical leave _____

i. commitment to the profession
(i.e., intrinsic motivation) _____

other

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Briefly describe mechanisms through which rewards are distributed.

_____

_____

_____

_____

D. What do you consider to be the main obstacles or constraints on faculty development at your campus at the present time? (Please rank on a 1-5 scale, with 1 being most important.)

administration
attitudes _____
organization _____
faculty organization
senate _____
employee organization _____
heavy teaching load _____
campus culture and attitudes _____
lack of designated funds _____
other

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Briefly describe how these constraints operate on your campus at this time.

_____

_____

_____

_____